

congregation or the community. It wasn't easy. It took sacrifice; but, with determination, they stuck to their plan, lived within their means, and—in less than 3 years—made the final payment on their bank note.

During the time they were eliminating the debt, the church gave over a half a million dollars to local ministries, charities, and world missions. In less than 36 months, this relatively small congregation took on a mountain: a mountain of debt. At the end of last week's service, after hearing a sermon about moving mountains, the congregation celebrated as they burned their bank note.

Today, I congratulate Pastor Joe McKaig and the congregation of Oakland Heights Baptist Church for achieving this significant goal and for being an example of fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, if a church with a modest congregation in an average community can pay off an overwhelming debt, I believe the most powerful and influential Nation on the Earth should be able to pay off its overwhelming debt; but, just as with this church, it starts with a vision, followed by a plan and a determination to achieve the goal.

Mr. Speaker, I have a vision, a vision of a debt-free America. With a goal, a sound fiscal plan that includes living within our means while providing the constitutional services of our government, we can achieve a debt-free Nation.

We owe it to our children to 1 day, 1 day soon, write the final check to our creditors and burn America's bank note to the world.

FILL UP YOUR PLATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, in 2013, I participated in my first "Monte's March" to raise money for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Along with my friend local radio host Monte Bel Monte and several others, we walked 26 miles in 1 day, from Northampton to Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Along the way, we stopped at the Amherst Survival Center where low-income people can go to receive food, clothing, medical advice, and a number of other services to help them through hard times.

The executive director handed me a stack of paper plates. On the plates, people who used the Amherst Survival Center had written how hunger had impacted their lives.

Inspired by this simple yet powerful message, last Thursday, I launched #fillupyourplate on my Web site at mcgovern.house.gov. It is a place where people can tell me what SNAP, or food stamps, means to them or how hunger has impacted their lives. Responses are posted on my Web site to create a wall of virtual paper plates.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House Agriculture Committee, which I am proud to serve on, held the first hearing in its top-to-bottom review of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

SNAP is the Nation's preeminent antihunger program that provides critical food assistance to more than 46 million Americans. Last year, 16 million children—or 1 in 5 American children—relied on SNAP. Unfortunately, every indication is that Republicans will try to cut this critical safety net program yet again.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support rigorous oversight of Federal programs, but we shouldn't single SNAP out for aggressive or unnecessary scrutiny. It already has one of the lowest error rates among all Federal programs, and CBO projections show that SNAP caseloads and spending are expected to fall as our economy continues to improve.

One of the reasons why I started the #fillupyourplate campaign was to make sure that the voices of those who use SNAP, who are struggling to make ends meet, are heard in the discussions here in Washington. All too often, the real stories of those who are struggling get drowned out by false rhetoric and partisan talking points.

Mr. Speaker, so far, I have received more than 100 virtual paper plates. I want to read just a few of the messages.

From Michelle, she wrote: "SNAP means that many junior ranking members' families will not go hungry while their military spouses are away defending this Nation."

From Patricia: "I am a single mother of two. I currently work at Dunkin' Donuts. If my SNAP benefits got cut, I would not be able to pay my rent because I would be spending all of my paychecks on food for my children. I lived in a homeless shelter for a year before coming to my apartment in October of 2014.

"If my SNAP benefits are cut, I will be back in a shelter. I do not plan on being on SNAP benefits forever. I would like to finish my degree and get a job that will support my household without any assistance, but for now, I need help."

From Cherise: "It means my children won't go to bed hungry and can function better in school because they have food in their bellies. It also lets me buy more healthy and fresh foods I wouldn't have access to if I had to pay out of pocket. I am grateful for this program. There is no joy in watching children struggle over something so easily prevented."

From Sabine: "SNAP to my family means I don't have to choose between paying the lights or making sure I feed my son breakfast in the morning. Having my SNAP benefits takes a huge load off my \$243 take-home check from work a week. With SNAP, my son is guaranteed food in his tummy."

From David: "It meant my family was still able to eat while I was be-

tween jobs. My wife had to quit her job to stay home and take care of our special-needs daughter. A month after the birth of our second daughter, I lost my job and went almost a year before finding a job that paid enough to provide for our family.

"At one time, I was holding four part-time jobs at the same time. I never thought I would have to rely on government assistance but, now, don't know how we would have gotten by without it."

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Mr. Speaker, I am committed to making sure the voices of those who rely on SNAP are heard in the conversation here in Washington, and I am committed to end hunger now.

I would remind my colleagues that those who are on SNAP are real people who have real families. They are facing difficult times that they hope will soon pass. Rather than cutting their food benefit or making them jump through more hoops, as some in this Chamber have advocated, we ought to support them. Too often, the focus of this Congress is on ways to help the well-off become even more well-off, but we must not forget those who are struggling. They are our constituents. They are our neighbors. They are our brothers and sisters.

I encourage people to visit my Web site, www.mcgovern.house.gov, to share what SNAP means to them.

IN HONOR OF JOHN EDWARD BUSH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Black History Month, I rise in honor of an Arkansas son, John Edward Bush, whose entrepreneurial spirit and history of service to his community continue to inspire us to this day.

John Edward Bush was born into slavery on November 14, 1856, orphaned at the age of 7, and freed from slavery at the end of the Civil War. When he had no permanent home or means to support himself, he worked odd jobs until, one day, he was taken to Capital Hill City School in Little Rock and forced to attend. He became a dedicated student, working as a brick molder to pay for his education. In 1876, he graduated with honors from Capital Hill City School in Little Rock, where he then served as principal for 2 years.

Mr. Bush served as the chairman of the Republican Party in Arkansas, but he is best known in Arkansas as the co-founder of the Mosaic Templars of America in 1883.

Together with Chester Keatts, Mr. Bush began the Mosaic Templars to aid African Americans who were being refused insurance coverage for illness, death, and funeral costs by White insurers. The efforts of Mr. Bush and Mr. Keatts, in service to their community, brought economic security and advancement to a group that had been

marginalized and neglected. By 1900, the activities of the Mosaic Templars had broadened to include an insurance company, a publishing company, a nursing school, a building and loan association, a business college, and even a hospital.

What started as a small enterprise to provide services to former slaves seeking a better life evolved into a thriving business. At its height in the 1920s, the positive influence of the Mosaic Templars was felt by its more than 80,000 members belonging to chapters in 26 States and six foreign countries. While this noble institution fell on hard times during the Great Depression, its impact continued.

A pillar in the Little Rock community, Mr. Bush rose to heightened levels of prominence when he was appointed as the Receiver of Public Monies by President William McKinley. His success in this role and deep-seated sense of integrity brought him to the attention of Booker T. Washington and facilitated his reappointment four times by President Theodore Roosevelt and President Taft.

That relationship with Dr. Washington became one of trusted confidence and close friendship. Mr. Bush was invited to give the commencement address at Tuskegee, and Washington, in turn, was the dedication speaker of the Mosaic Templars' new building in 1913.

Mr. Bush passed away at the age of 60 in 1916.

Today, Mr. Bush's descendants remain pillars of our civic community in Little Rock, and his legacy lives on at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, which is an outstanding educational resource for our rich African American traditions in Arkansas.

As we celebrate Black History Month, we remember John Bush's legacy that continues to inspire and that remains a major and important part of Arkansas history.

DHS SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, in less than 2 days, House Republicans are prepared to shut down the Department of Homeland Security, threatening the safety of the American people.

At home, there is a noted and beloved philosopher by the name of Yogi Berra, who once said, "It's like déjà vu all over again."

And once more, House Republicans are taking the American people on another reckless, unnecessary, irresponsible legislative joy ride, guaranteed to crash and burn. You did it first in October of 2013 by shutting down the government for 16 days, crashing and burning parts of the American economy, costing us \$24 billion in lost economic productivity. Now you are prepared to crash and burn the safety and the security of the American people.

Why would you contemplate, Mr. Speaker, such a reckless action, particularly at a time when there are terrorists all across the world who want to kill Americans, including, as recently uncovered, three terrorists at home in New York determined, apparently, to bomb parts of the Coney Island district I represent? Why would you contemplate shutting down the Department of Homeland Security at this moment—or at any moment—simply to satisfy the rightwing thirst of the anti-immigration faction of your party?

Let me pause there parenthetically for a moment.

Because they seem to have concluded that this President exceeded his authority when he issued an executive action providing immigration relief, notwithstanding the fact that every President since Dwight Eisenhower has taken executive action to provide some form of immigration relief. It has occurred 39 times since the 1950s. President Eisenhower did it. President Nixon did it. President Ford did it. President Reagan did it. President George Herbert Walker Bush did it. President George W. Bush did it. But when President Obama issues an executive action to provide immigration relief to fit these times, all of a sudden, we have got a constitutional crisis.

Now, perhaps reasonable people can disagree with the lawfulness of his order, but the reasonable approach would be to allow the courts to work it out, not shutting down the Department of Homeland Security.

Many of my friends on the other side of the aisle are so-called strict constructionists. What would the constitution have us do? Well, we have got an article I legislative branch, an article II executive branch, and an article III judicial branch. The Founders have indicated, I believe, that they would have us work out constitutional differences through the court system, not by shutting down the Department of Homeland Security—causing 30,000 employees to have to go home and another 210,000 employees to have to come to work without pay, stressed, suffering from anxiety, uncertain as to how to pay their bills, pay their mortgage, pay their rent, pay their medical expenses. Do we want to subject our Homeland Security employees to that type of anxiety when terrorists only have to be right once and we have to be right 100 percent of the time?

Then I was troubled, Mr. Speaker, to learn that, apparently, you haven't spoken to MITCH MCCONNELL in several weeks. The people back home in the district that I represent and Americans all across the country are shaking their heads. I know you don't like talking to NANCY PELOSI. I know you didn't like talking to HARRY REID. You don't like talking to the President of the United States. But you can't have a conversation with Senate Republican Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL? It is not a long commute from this side of the Capitol to the other side of the

Capitol. In fact, Mr. Speaker, you can take the train. Is it not reasonable that you have a conversation to try to work this out?

The American people want us to focus on bigger paychecks, better jobs, retirement security, higher education affordability, strengthening the middle class; instead, you are throwing a legislative temper tantrum, jeopardizing the safety and security of the American people? Shame on you. Let's get back to doing America's business.

THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE AND COAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, with his veto of the Keystone XL pipeline, the President has again decided to stand with radical environmentalists at the expense of the American people. Republicans and Democrats came together in both Houses of Congress to pass this commonsense bill, yet the President has seen fit to deny the American people the new jobs it would create.

The President has a demonstrated record of picking favorites in the energy industry. We all remember how the President steered billions in taxpayer dollars to Solyndra, only to see the flawed solar company collapse.

In 2014 alone, the Department of Energy directed over \$1.9 billion in taxpayer dollars to investments in alternative energy. At the same time, the President has waged war on West Virginia energy jobs. This year, the administration is expected to ratchet up that war with new ozone standards and a new stream buffer zone rule. These overreaching regulations are intentionally designed to kill coal, with devastating outcomes for West Virginia and our entire Nation.

Coal supplies over 90 percent of energy consumed in West Virginia. An escalation of the President's war on coal would cause families in West Virginia to see huge increases in their home energy prices. The escalation would also have a terrible impact on jobs in our State. The American Mining Association has projected that the new stream buffer zone regulation would destroy as many as 85,000 jobs in the Appalachian region.

The administration has also held up permitting for natural gas exports and proposed damaging regulations on the exploration of new natural gas deposits. The Keystone veto further confirms the President's commitment to continuing his obstructionist agenda.

With so much at stake for West Virginia families, we must strengthen our resolve like never before to fight for an energy policy which allows the free market and consumers to choose, not government to discriminate.